



GREATER  
CAMBRIDGE  
PARTNERSHIP

## Keeping Greater Cambridge Moving:

The case for the Cambridge Sustainable Travel Zone  
and its benefits for Greater Cambridge

Summer 2023



# Foreword

**The roads of Greater Cambridge are congested. We have legally binding carbon reduction targets to meet. We urgently need to find an alternative to car travel, but we know our public transport infrastructure isn't good enough. The future of our growing city as a global centre of excellence is at risk. This was why a City Deal was signed and we now have the opportunity to act.**

With Making Connections, we are setting out a proposal for significant change to our transport network. With this scale of change, we recognise how important it is to talk and listen to local people who live and work in Greater Cambridge to help refine proposals. That's why our series of public consultations — where residents and community groups shared their views — have been instrumental in shaping the plans we are now putting to decision makers.

There is no denying that 58% of respondents opposed the original Cambridge Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) proposal. And so, we listened, and adapted. We have reduced the number of hours the STZ will be in place from 12 to six; we have widened exemptions for those who need it most and we have introduced 50 free days per year for car users.

We have made adjustments whilst — crucially — ensuring we can still deliver a plan that will finance the improvements to transport infrastructure the city needs. This document provides more information about the changes and why we believe they're right for Greater Cambridge.

By listening, we also know that people are supportive of change. We know residents want more bus services, with less congestion and better value fares. We know they are open to finding alternatives to car travel. So, we are confident that our new and updated proposal has the potential to deliver improvements that will see Cambridge retain its position as a leading global city, and provide a better, fairer and more affordable transport system our residents are asking for.

The opportunity is now, and it is clear. I'm recommending this revised Making Connections scheme, including the updated STZ proposal, is supported by decision makers, for its ability to safeguard the future of Greater Cambridge and improve the quality of life of all those who live and work here.

**Rachel Stopard,  
Chief Executive,  
Greater  
Cambridge  
Partnership**



**“We cannot pile ever more cars, delivery vans and taxis onto the same congested urban roads. That would be difficult for the roads, let alone the planet, to tolerate.”**

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP,  
A Better, Greener Britain 2021



# Listening to your views

## Revisiting proposals for the Sustainable Travel Zone

Following the 2022 consultation, the GCP has reconsidered its proposals. 34 per cent of consultation survey respondents were supportive of the STZ, but 58 per cent opposed the previous proposals.

We've revisited the proposals in line with feedback from the consultation, which we've carefully reviewed to help model a viable option that meets the transport challenges facing Greater Cambridge.

## Key considerations

The most commonly occurring comments on the Road User Charge, other than general expressions of opposition or support, were a sense of unfairness or that exemptions don't go far enough; concerns about impact on business; the suggestion that zone residents should be exempt;

concern about paying to access essential services, such as visits to hospital, and the impact on journeys to work.

We've listened carefully to the feedback and have updated the proposals to address these concerns. There is lots to consider; the updated proposals respond to public feedback, but they do not deliver the preferred scenario and benefits set out in consultation.

The scale of the benefits to future bus services and sustainable transport improvements will be reduced – particularly by changing the charging time from 12 hours to six hours (peak time only).

However, the new proposals will still achieve traffic reduction and are capable of funding bus and sustainable transport measures.

# Revised proposals

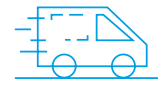
We have listened and revised changes to the proposals. The charge – £5 for cars, £10 for vans and £50 for HGVs and coaches – remains the same, but the GCP's new proposals will reduce the impact on people who live and work in Cambridge:



**Weekday peak hour charging between 0700-1000 and 1500-1800 only.** Moving to peak time restricts charging to the times of day when traffic is heaviest (therefore maintaining maximum impact in terms of creating road space and reducing congestion when it is most needed), and it allows greater freedom for people to move around, and deliveries to be received in the middle of the day. Peak time charging also substantially reduces the impact on small businesses and the self-employed, and reflects consultation feedback.



**Fifty free days** for account holders to address concerns about the impact on lower income groups and those who depend most on their car.



**Locally owned SME** discount of 50 per cent on heavy goods vehicles (HGV) and vans (LGV) to support local businesses who rely on vehicles to trade.



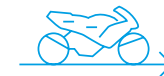
**Low income discounts of 50 percent** to address concerns about fairness.



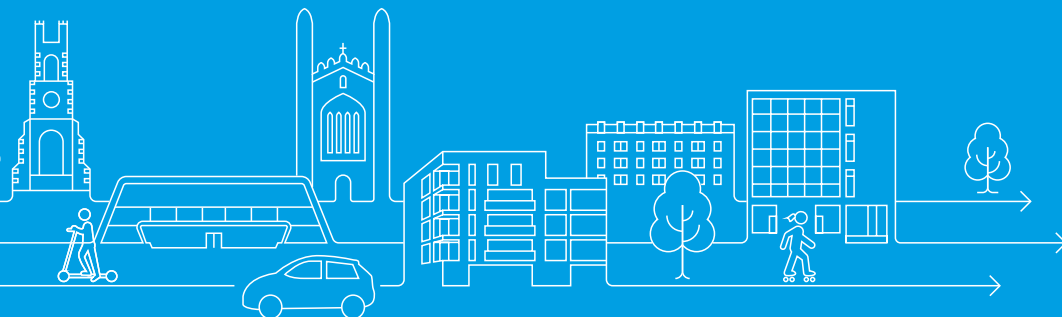
**There are also many exemptions for most people who need to go to hospital by car** - matching the parking allowances that the hospitals make for patients, visitors and staff - and for anyone in receipt of carers benefit and mobility PIP.



**The charging period will end earlier** at 1800 (not 1900) to allow evening social, caring and leisure activities.



**There will be no charge for motorbikes**, which were originally subject to a £5 daily charge.



# Responding to feedback

## What you told us

## Changes being proposed

Why should I pay when it's not congested?

Charging only at peak times

How will small business manage?

50% discount for local SME's vehicles;  
no charge for any delivery outside of peak times

Sometimes I just need to use a car!

50 free days a year for account holders

What about evening social, caring,  
voluntary and sports activities?

Charge would now end at 6 pm instead of 7 pm

What about disabled people without a blue badge?

Those in receipt of mobility PIP also exempt

What about informal carers?

Those in receipt of Carers benefit don't pay

Why should motorbikes pay the same as cars?

There will be no charge for motorcycles

Why should I pay to go to, or visit someone in hospital

There will be no charge for most patients and staff

# Cambridge is thriving – and full of opportunity

## Our local area is growing

The Greater Cambridge area is growing fast and comprises the city of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, within the county of Cambridgeshire. It is home to more than 300,000 people.



## A cluster of talent and opportunity

Greater Cambridge is renowned for its high-tech clusters, with specialisms covering electronics, digital technology, Artificial Intelligence, and life sciences. It is an intellectual powerhouse and driving force for science and innovation in the UK. As home to the world-leading University of Cambridge,

it draws talent from across the globe and drives innovation and excellence. Hundreds of new businesses spin out of the university each year. Cambridge leads the UK in patent applications and is among the top W25 cities around the world for venture capital investment. Research here creates and supports high value opportunities and manufacturing jobs elsewhere in the UK.

## A global centre of excellence

Greater Cambridge is highly networked, characterised by its world-leading innovation and overlapping interactions between academia and university, industry and business, and government and public sector institutions, especially in biosciences, health, and the NHS. These interactions further drive innovation and economic growth, generating new employment



opportunities and prosperity in Greater Cambridge and the rest of the UK. Cambridge competes with similar global clusters of excellence around Oxford University in the UK, Silicon Valley and Boston in the US, and other clusters in Singapore and China.

## A flourishing future in health and science

The south of the city contains the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC). It is the city's biggest employer, and the largest centre of medical research and health science in Europe. The CBC has a well-deserved international reputation for life sciences, exemplified by its world leading research in cancer, transplantation, and respiratory diseases.

## Increasing job opportunities

Together, the city of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire have seen big increases in professional, scientific, and technical employment. Highly skilled workers and entrepreneurs are attracted to the area. Greater Cambridge is home to more than 1,500 technology companies, employing more than 54,000 people, and generating combined revenues of more than £12bn.

## An attractive place to live and work

As a beautiful and historic city, Cambridge also enjoys a strong visitor economy and is recognised as a great place to live and work. Small businesses are continuing to

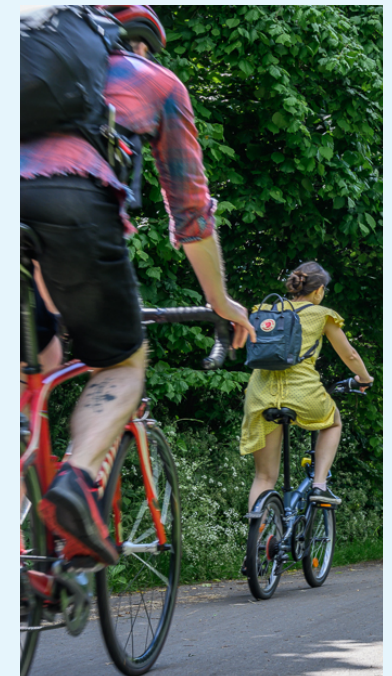


grow in Cambridge with a record number of registered companies being recorded during 2022 and 1,500 new businesses being formed last year.

## Hosting the world's biggest companies

Greater Cambridge is also home to 60 multinational companies, including the

global biopharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca, which has its global headquarters and DISC research and development centre at the CBC. The British semiconductor and software design company Arm, often referred to as the 'crown jewel' of the UK tech sector, was founded in Cambridge in 1990. The US tech giants, Apple, Amazon, and Microsoft, among many others, have all made significant investments in Cambridge in recent years. In advanced engineering, privately-owned Marshall is an independent global business that sits in the heart of the Cambridge eco-system.



# Cambridge will be held back without significant change

## Car dependency threatens Cambridge's wellbeing

Between 2011 and 2021 Greater Cambridge's population increased by 13 per cent to 307,700. By 2031 the area's population is expected to be 30 per cent higher than it was in 2011. This will further increase congestion on an already struggling transport system. Unless action is taken, congestion and car dependency will continue to threaten the area's social, economic, and environmental wellbeing.

## Traffic damages health and wellbeing

Cambridge has a large travel to work area (TTWA) and with limited public transport options and, unreliable and expensive bus services, Cambridge is highly reliant on the private car. Congestion clogs up roads, making journeys slow and unreliable. Poor air quality from traffic emissions is making people ill; causing lung cancer, respiratory and cardiovascular disease, heart attacks, dementia, and asthma.

## Congestion costs time and money

Researchers calculate the average driver in the UK lost 80 hours to traffic congestion in 2022, which can be valued at over £700 per driver. Congestion means more than one in five buses run late.



**“As a city grows, it is often left contending with increased pressures on its infrastructure, leading to more congestion, higher carbon emissions, and poorer air quality. Encouraging more people out of private cars and on to public transport will be essential to resolving these problems and ensuring continued economic success.”**

Centre for Cities

**“Those on the highest incomes typically drive the most, while those on the lowest absolutely depend on the bus, walking and cycling.”**

Transport Planning Society

**“Rebalancing Cambridgeshire transport towards people locked out of car ownership is long overdue.”**

Parents for a Sustainable Travel Zone

**“Anyone who knows Cambridge will know traffic congestion is a huge problem, making journeys to and across the city intolerable at times.”**

Dr Mike More, Chair, Cambridge University Hospitals

## People deserve reliable alternatives to private cars

Cambridge is one of most unequal cities in the UK. A lack of affordable and reliable public transport means for many people there are few viable alternatives to the private car. For those who choose not to own a car, or cannot afford one, it is more difficult to access new opportunities in education and employment, as well as travel to important medical appointments. Those living in nearby market towns and rural areas also miss out because of poor transport options. If these issues are not addressed, further growth could be stifled, and the quality of life for many people further reduced.

## Poor infrastructure will see Cambridge decline

2019's local industrial strategy warned, “the success of Greater Cambridge cannot be taken for granted. There are serious risks that without investment in housing, transport, and infrastructure that the area needs, the global businesses there may take flight to more attractive global centres of innovation-based growth”.



## Cambridge is held back by poor transport

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) identified poor infrastructure as a brake on growth in the area, with businesses stressing, “better road networks and finding a solution to reduce traffic congestion in Cambridge” was a top priority. The CPIER concluded, “A package of transport and other infrastructure projects to alleviate the growing pains of Greater Cambridge should be considered the single most important infrastructure priority facing the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority in the short to medium term.”

## Doing nothing will hinder growth

Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, has announced ambitious plans to deliver “a new urban quarter in Cambridge which will unlock the city's full potential as a source of innovation and talent.”

This announcement included a vision to connect the new quarter to the rest of the city with “a sustainable transport network that sees current congestion becoming a thing of the past.”

Cambridge is a key driver for UK innovation and growth – and doing nothing about the congested transport systems is not an option.



# Why Cambridge needs a Sustainable Travel Zone

## Reducing congestion is better for everyone

The STZ is a once in a generation opportunity to make travelling in and around Cambridge easier and quicker. It will reduce the traffic congestion that blights daily life in Cambridge, making it quicker and easier to get to work, medical appointments, to shop, go to school, college or university, visit family and friends, have a night out, make deliveries, and get to the places you need to get to:

- The new, cheaper, and better bus services people want now will be introduced before the STZ charge comes into operation
- The GCP will build the infrastructure to make walking, cycling, wheeling, and scooting more attractive and safer before road charging begins.





## Broad acceptance of the need to improve transport in Greater Cambridge

There is a widespread acceptance that something has to be done. Last year's consultation and an extensive programme of public and stakeholder engagement, including a Citizens Assembly in 2019, demonstrate there is support for change and a need to introduce measures that keep people moving around Greater Cambridge.

## Considering ways to improve transport and reduce congestion

The Greater Cambridge Partnership has thoroughly assessed a range of options to raise the money needed to improve buses, walking, and cycling provision and lower the level of traffic congestion in the area. It showed:

- Higher parking charges or the introduction of a Workplace Parking Levy would not reduce traffic levels sufficiently, even if charges were higher than those proposed for the Sustainable Travel Zone. Parking charges were the least supported option in the 2021 Making Connections consultation
- Charging all vehicles, rather than just the most polluting vehicles, would have the greatest benefits, which ruled out a charge on just the worst polluting vehicles, such as a clean air zone or a

version of London's Ultra-low emission zone (Ulez). Under such a scheme, electric vehicles and the most modern vehicles do not pay a charge, leaving less well-off households, who tend to own older cars, to bear the brunt of any new road user charge

- A pollution charge was also considered, with zero emission vehicles exempt from the charge. This had limited benefits, as more people are expected to buy electric cars over time, so traffic levels would increase and the income to spend on bus, walking and cycling improvements would decrease. Feedback also suggested that not charging zero emission cars could be unfair to those who couldn't afford to buy one.

**“Road user charging options would provide a greater reduction in traffic and congestion and offer road users more reliable journey times. Road charging options were more preferred than parking charges.”**

**“There are no easy solutions to this challenge. But no change is not an option. If other cities can make major changes, so can we.”**

Dr Mike More, Chair, Cambridge University Hospitals

**“An STZ and a properly funded bus network could be transformative, connecting people to friends and family once more.”**

Parents for a Sustainable Travel Zone

**“Improving the city's public transport network and boosting ridership will be key to driving economic growth – and it is right to consider congestion charging as an option to fund this.”**

Centre for Cities

**“We need more towns and cities to take bold measures such as these to enable the creation of streets that are designed around people rather than cars and to reduce the motor traffic that generates so many harmful emissions.”**

Living Streets





# How the Sustainable Travel Zone will benefit Greater Cambridge

## Funding better bus services accessible to all

**The Cambridge Sustainable Travel Zone will pay for the better bus services people want now.** Bus timetables have been cut since Covid. Taking the bus at peak times can take a third longer than at off-peak times. Buses are often unreliable, and don't run at the times many people want because of the way they are currently paid for.

Current fragmented, unreliable, and costly bus services make it more difficult for many people to pursue new opportunities and access the services they need, further exacerbating exclusion and inequality.

With an initial injection of £50 million to support improvements in the bus network before any potential road user charge is implemented - followed by around £26 million generated annually from the road user charge to invest in bus services - a more reliable and secure bus network can be sustained for years to come:

- There will be more buses, all of them new low emission electric buses. New flat rate fares will make buses cheaper, and they will be easier and safer to use

- Waiting times will be shorter and buses more reliable thanks to lower traffic levels. New express services will offer even faster journeys using busway routes and the GCP will complete the Greenway network of 13 routes
- Opportunities for new bus routes and services will be opened up, transforming the bus network serving rural areas, villages, market towns, the city, and employment areas
- New bookable bus services will give every village access to its own bus service
- The Cambridge Sustainable Travel Zone is expected to increase public transport use by 40 per cent and will provide the revenue into the future that will sustain a bus network that works for everyone, and we can all be proud of.



## Greener, healthier and safer ways to get around

**The Cambridge Sustainable Travel Zone will provide more choice by creating the new healthier, greener, and fairer ways to travel around the city.**

People want more opportunities to cycle and walk but are often put off by the lack of road space on crowded streets. The STZ will reduce traffic congestion and reduce our dependency on the car by offering realistic and reliable alternatives, such as better buses and more walking and cycling choices:

- Reductions in traffic will free up road space and make the air cleaner, making walking and cycling safer and more attractive
- Investment in buses, Park and Ride, walking, cycling, and scooting will create more ways to get around that are better for our health and the environment
- Direct, fast, and reliable buses, and safer cycle routes will transform school and career opportunities for young people
- Hospitals will be much easier and quicker to get to by bus and Park and Ride, avoiding the need to pay expensive parking charges.

## Doubling Park & Ride sites - which will be outside the Sustainable Travel Zone

**The Greater Cambridge Partnership is doubling Park and Ride provision around Cambridge and making them more accessible by different modes of transport, including by bus and active travel options, such as cycling.**

Buses would be much less likely to get stuck in traffic making journeys quicker and more predictable than they are now, enabling people to drive their car to their nearest park and ride and catch a bus into the city.

- Free Park and Ride sites are deliberately located outside the charging zone so that users travelling from outside the charging zone don't have to pay to use them
- The expanded Park and Ride will add an extra 10,000 car parking spaces, improve walking and cycling provision, and provide more electric vehicle charging points
- Onward bus connections into the city will be quicker and more frequent, cost just £1 one way, and will connect key employment sites along the way to improve connectivity.



**“Transformative change isn’t easy, but if we want to create healthier places and enable our communities to thrive without having to use a car, bold plans, such as the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Travel Zone, are urgently required.”**

Sustrans

**“Building a good quality public transport system in Cambridge will require more than local control of the bus system – substantial investment in infrastructure and revenue support is also needed.”**

Centre for Cities

**“Any city with a growing population and congested roads seeking effective local transport will realistically only achieve that goal if people are encouraged to make the shift out of private cars for some journeys.”**

Sir John Armitt, Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission

## Helping businesses grow

### **The Cambridge Sustainable Travel Zone will support businesses to grow.**

Business are being held back by a lack of space, as anyone who navigates its clogged up narrow streets knows.

Cambridge needs to support its small businesses, especially during challenging times, because they help generate the growth that makes Greater Cambridge such a success. The GCP is doing its bit by tackling the gridlock that increases the cost of doing business in the area:

- Drivers will only pay the daily charge once, no matter how many journeys they make into and around the STZ during the day
- The STZ will reduce traffic on streets in the zone and cut time wasted in traffic jams that often make journeys in and around Cambridge a misery
- The new proposals include an SME discount for local businesses – this will be a 50 per cent discount on HGVs and vans to support local businesses who rely on vehicles to trade
- Journey times will become more predictable, helping those who rely on their vehicles for work to be more productive, as they waste less time in clogged up streets (plumbers, electricians, delivery drivers, coaches etc)
- The new proposed charging hours in peak times means that businesses can make and receive deliveries during the day without incurring costs from the road user charge.

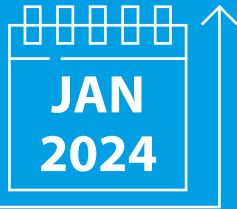
## Helping Cambridge continue to thrive

### **The Cambridge Sustainable Travel Zone meets the needs of a growing and dynamic city.**

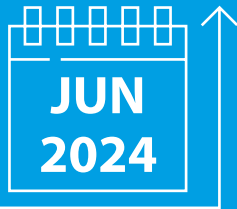
Cambridge is one of the most beautiful and fastest growing cities in the UK. Businesses want to invest, but a lack of laboratory space is a constraint on the ambitions of entrepreneurs and growing businesses. A shortage of housing, and the high-cost costs of commuting make it harder for employers like the NHS and many others to retain and recruit essential staff.

- The Government wants to “supercharge Europe’s science capital” and help Cambridge to continue to grow and drive the UK economy forward. Ministers have ambitious plans for further house building and business development that are designed to capitalise on Cambridge’s success in technology and life sciences
- The Cambridge Sustainable Travel Zone will create new opportunities and prosperity by making it easier and cheaper to get around, giving businesses access to more customers and bigger pools of labour to tap into. This will also create new opportunities for people who were previously excluded by poor and limited transport services.

# What 2024/25 could look like



**More buses to Addenbrooke's at shift times, 7 days / week**



**More Park and Ride buses to Addenbrooke's at shift times, 7 days / week**



**Links connecting market towns to Cambridge**

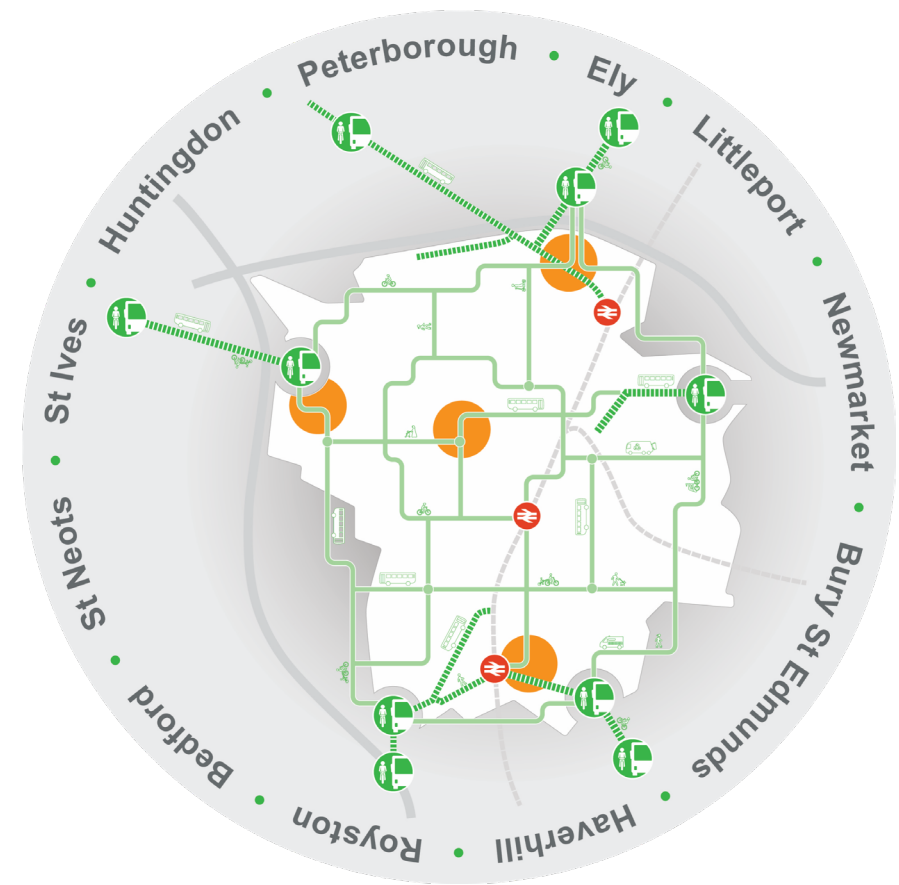
**Faster links to large villages around Cambridge**



**October 2024 - Reduced Fares**

From 2025, new routes, timetables, frequencies and fare structures will be up for discussion and decisions by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority.

Based on current network consistent with emerging CPCA network review



- **Cheaper fares** meaning more affordable travel
- **Simple ticketing** to further improve the passenger experience
- **More routes** connecting more people and places
- **Better bus infrastructure** making journeys safer and more pleasant
- **High frequency, faster services** offering a real alternative
- **An increase in rural services** providing connections to market towns, rail stations and the core bus network
- **Longer operating hours** providing freedom to travel at more times of day



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# Making Connections

[www.greatercambridge.org.uk/mc](http://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/mc)

